

# White Paper Report

Report ID: 98610

Application Number: PK5002307

Project Director: Beth Twiss Houting (btwisshouting@hsp.org)

Institution: Historical Society of Pennsylvania

Reporting Period: 10/1/2007-10/31/2010

Report Due: 5/31/2011

Date Submitted: 6/8/2011

## **NEH/IMLS DIGITAL KNOWLEDGE GRANT**

### **FINAL PERFORMANCE REPORT for PK-50023-07**

#### **PhilaPlace Project**

**April 25, 2011**

**Prepared by:** Kim Sajet, President & CEO

**Grantee:** The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP)

#### **Included:**

1. Summary
2. Project Activities
  - The Website
  - Community Involvement
  - Marketing
  - Changes to Technology
  - Changes to Staff
3. Accomplishments
4. Evaluation
  - Initial Visitation and Social Media Assessment
  - Mapping Assessment
  - Summative Evaluation
5. Audiences
6. Continuation of the Project
7. Long Term Impact
8. Grant Products
9. Appendices
  - Appendix A. Website Analytics and Social Media Assessment
  - Appendix B. Map Section Evaluation
  - Appendix C. Summative Evaluation

---

#### **1. Summary**

The PhilaPlace website ([www.philaplace.org](http://www.philaplace.org)) was launched on December 9, 2009 at City Hall to an estimated audience of 450 people. Included in the celebration were the Mayor of Philadelphia, members of city council, community leaders, organizational partners, and an extremely diverse range of citizens from throughout Philadelphia. Developed as an interactive web-based experience incorporating content from a variety of sources, PhilaPlace has both met the original expectations of the NEH/IMLS grant, and in many cases outperformed the five established goals articulated in the original application: to (1) establish

a model for interacting between the amateur and the expert, (2) bring to light multiethnic perspectives through stories and primary sources, (3) map history through time and space, (4) create new historical and cultural interpretations, and (5) create ongoing resources.

The development of PhilaPlace however was not without its challenges. Specifically, the site launch was delayed by six months, and the entire project delayed over a year primarily because the original website developer went out of business. As a result of the downturn in the economy, staff cutbacks impacted the delivery of a number of support activities such as neighborhood trolley tours and a self-guided walking tour. With the rise of social media a blog was added to the scope, but mobile applications were not, and have had to be addressed retrospective of the grant.

Perhaps the most challenging aspect of the project happened after the grant was completed. Always considered a ‘prototype’ to understand whether public history could be made available online, the ongoing legacy of the successful “first phase” is an extremely robust technological architecture with the potential for vastly more historical content. In order to sustain further content development for the PhilaPlace website, HSP is seeking to develop a consortium of organizations with similar interests in geo-history. It is anticipated that in this way PhilaPlace can have a shared mechanism of gathering historical information about the community that is developed by, and for, Philadelphians themselves.

## **2. Project Activities**

### **2.1.1 Provide a description of the major activities that occurred during the grant period**

As described in the grant application, the PhilaPlace website uses a multimedia format from a variety of sources, including: five interactive maps (both contemporary and historic), text, photographs, and audio and video clips. The use of Geographic Information System (GIS) technology allows visitors to map stories from the past to specific places over time, while the development of a robust content management system (CMS) allows users to make new historical associations and contribute their own content.

### **2.1.2 The Website**

The site includes the following features that the visitor can locate by clicking the tabs along the top banner:

- **Home Page** – this features a historical map of Philadelphia from the HSP collection with rotating sites that pop up in three colors/types: red = HSP provided content, yellow = Partner provided content, and green = visitor contributed content. If a visitor clicks on one of the sites, he/she is taken to the interactive contemporary (Google) map where the site appears and corresponding stories are featured. On the lower half of the home page is a short description of PhilaPlace and what a visitor can do on the site, a “featured” site (rotates from pre-selected sites) and a “most viewed” site. To date there over 1,507 stories in the collection relating to over 211 sites.
- **Map Page** – This is an interactive map designed on a Google mapping platform. It features 5 interactive map layers dating to the present, 1875, 1895, 1934, and 1962 with legends attached. The historic maps were provided by the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network that included maps from HSP’s own collection, the Free Library of

Philadelphia, and the Athenaeum of Philadelphia. From a drop-down menu, the visitor can select the map layer he/she wishes to view. On the left of the map page is “Find Places” which allows the visitor to narrow his/her search by clicking different boxes. Included here is the ability for a visitor to narrow a search by neighborhood from a drop down menu. Also on the left, the visitor can choose to take one of the two tours. We have the ability to add more tours over time to this feature.

- **Topics** – From this page visitors can choose to view stories by a theme or topic that covers every aspect of daily life. There are fourteen topics ranging from “cemeteries” to “work” in the two primary neighborhoods of Southwark / South Philadelphia and Northern Liberties / Kensington. Additional neighborhoods have begun to be populated with content including Fishtown, Germantown, and West Philadelphia. Also appearing on this page is an overview of the history and culture of the neighborhoods. There is the capability to add more topics in the future if the need should arise. Material that doesn’t correspond to a particular site on the interactive map is located here. This makes it possible to accommodate longer essay pieces that don’t correspond only to one particular place.
- **Collection** – Originally to be named Images & Media, based on user evaluations during the build phase, the name of this section was changed to Collection. The Collection indicates the entire digital collection of PhilaPlace including those from HSP, partner institutions, and visitor contributed content. From the left hand column on this page, the visitor can narrow his/her search and can click on a full view of each image to view metadata. Currently there are 1147 images with text entries, 8 audio-only stories, and 82 video and audio segments in the collection.
- **Blog** – Not originally included in the grant application, but added as staff recognized the rapid growth of social media; the blog allows visitors to read posts from the PhilaPlace team, partner posts, and community scholars. Anyone can post a comment. Since launch in December 2009 there have been nineteen blog posts primarily created from HSP staff or partners. Unfortunately very few people follow the blog. From December 9, 2009, to May 26, 2011, there were only 7,072 visits in total that averaged 13 visits/day or 91 visits/week. The answer no doubt lies in the fact that the blog was a late addition to the Website build and continually adding material and monitoring discussions was never included in the workflow. Had the project happened later, social media would have played a far greater role in the PhilaPlace design.

Nevertheless, HSP has sought to ensure that PhilaPlace is incorporated in its regular social media program. The result has been that when blog updates are cross-referenced on HSP’s Facebook page or Twitter account, people “like” the posts and there is a corresponding increase in web traffic to the PhilaPlace site.

- **Educators** – Four themed units provide teacher resources and classroom activities aimed for grades 6-12 aligned with Pennsylvania’s state education standards. Students can learn more about a neighborhood’s overall history by reading either of the two neighborhood timelines located in this section. The units are:

1. Mapping Our Neighborhood History ~ a guide to developing a local history mapping project so that students can explore the history and culture of their own communities and neighborhoods.
  2. Mapping South 4th Street to Fabric Row ~ an activity designed to introduce students to GIS mapping through the exploration of maps showing the evolution of Philadelphia's South 4th Street into Fabric Row.
  3. Discovering the 9th Street Market: A Treasure Hunt for Clues to the Past ~ a treasure hunt activity designed to get students to explore 9th Street —virtually or physically — and use these clues to the past to understand the history of the market and the transformation of its businesses and neighborhood over time.
  4. South Philly Kaleidoscope: The 9<sup>th</sup> Street Market Mural ~ an activity that uses the mural at 8th and Christian Street as a way to explore the history and changes in the 9th Street Market neighborhood and to learn about the role of public art.
- **About** – The visitor can read about the mission and history of the project here.
  - **Support** – Visitors can opt to support PhilaPlace through a Google Check Out feature.
  - **My PhilaPlace** - My PhilaPlace allows the visitor to create his/her own personal My PhilaPlace account. The visitor can save his/her favorite stories and places here and access them the next time he/she visits the site. The visitor can also add his/her own story from this section through the “Add a Story” feature. Following the lead of other similar sites (e.g. CityLore’s City of Memory site) in how to approach accepting and reviewing content for publication, PhilaPlace adopted the following three simple criteria for publication: 1. the material submitted cannot contain offensive language; 2. it must be within the bounds of the neighborhoods within which the site currently covers (all material outside those boundaries is saved for future publication once other neighborhoods are “launched”); 3. the submission should fall under at least one of the thematic categories that are listed on the topics tab.
  - **Add a Story** - through the Add a Story feature, a visitor can add up to 600 words of text and can add photographs as well as an audio or video clip. To date 78 “stories” have been submitted by the public.
  - **Search feature** – A key word search feature searches PhilaPlace content.
  - **Social Media** – Visitors can use the social media links on PhilaPlace to spread the word and share stories through Facebook, Twitter, Bloggin, and receive RSS feeds.

At the bottom of the site are tabs for Press, Legal Disclaimer, Credits, Email Sign-Up, and Contact.

#### 2.2.1 Community Involvement ~ Advisory Board

From its inception, PhilaPlace assembled a committed 19-member Advisory Board which met ten times between February 2008 and December 2010. As outlined in the original concept of the

project, the advisory board employed a collaborative ethnographic methodology (Collier & Collier 1986) that made decisions through a process of inviting community input. Representatives from a diverse range of cultures (i.e. Mexican, Southeast Asian, Italian, etc.) religious backgrounds (Muslim Jewish, Christian, etc.), ages, and experiences were included. The group was evenly divided between male and female.

The advisory board met often during 2009 and well after the launch of the website into 2010. By October 2010, however, and the end of the grant-phase, PhilaPlace was no longer in a “build” mode, but in a “maintain” mode. With the result that numerous changes in the lives of various members (i.e. new jobs, relocation, etc.), and the need to advance to the next level of content development, led to a re-thinking of the advisory board’s role and composition. Currently, the advisory board is expanding to not just include individuals but also *organizations* that have a stake in systematically adding content to the PhilaPlace website and a shared interest in its growth. For example, as well as representatives from various ethnic and cultural groups, organizational partners include the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Records, the Greater Philadelphia Preservation Alliance, the tourism office, and the Mural Arts Program .

After the successful completion of the grant-funded “first phase” it has been recognized that continually adding original content to the PhilaPlace website cannot be sustained wholly by HSP or through visitor-contributed content alone. Allowing organizations greater ownership and access to the PhilaPlace website by means of a ‘consortium’ or distributed model of content development is considered the next step in terms of sustainability. This brings additional questions of standardizing data and disambiguation to the forefront and will be more fully addressed under the Continuation of the Project section of this report.

### 2.2.2 Community Involvement ~ Partner Organizations

Including the three primary partners: HSP, the Department of Design at the University of Pennsylvania, and the Department of Records at the City of Philadelphia; over 21 organizations collaborated on PhilaPlace by means of content development, promotion and/or resource-sharing. Examples include the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia who co-presented the “Your Place and Mine” share-your-story neighborhood workshops in 2008 by providing staff, promotion and materials; Bryn Mawr College, Drexel and Temple Universities who provided student researchers; The Art Institute of Philadelphia who hosted a photographic exhibition; and neighborhood community associations who promoted and/or hosted resident discussions. Partner organizations also included commercial enterprises such as the specialty grocery Di Bruno Brothers who supplied food at the website launch, and Springboard media who provided computers at the same event at no cost. The website designers, Night Kitchen Interactive, dedicated their summer 2009 internship budget to employing students who interviewed and filmed citizens in their neighborhoods, supervised by HSP personnel.

In addition to attending the Advisory Board meetings, and providing a range of resources, PhilaPlace’s primary partners were introduced at two evening workshops that were held in Northern Liberties and South Philadelphia on October 17 and November 1, 2008. They included: Joan Saverino, the PhilaPlace Project Director at HSP; Patrick Hauck of the Preservation Alliance of Greater Philadelphia; Amy Hillier, Assistant Professor, School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania; and Joan Decker of the Philadelphia Department of Records together

with Robert Cheetham of Azavea (formerly Avencia) Corporation. Each presenter discussed their organization and how they were working together on PhilaPlace. There was a question and answer period with attendees and a total of 47 people participated.

### 2.2.3 Community Involvement ~ Programs

As set out in the grant application, PhilaPlace was never intended to be only a web-based project, and had in fact grown out of two very successful trolley tours held in 2006 involving residents and historians. The wider project goals were to include: (1) the PhilaPlace website, (2) self-guided walking tours, (3) “Share Your Favorite Photo Workshops” held in the neighborhoods, and (4) teacher workshops. Not part of the original IMLS/NEH narrative, but nevertheless completed, was the publication of the *Pennsylvania Legacies Magazine* in the Fall of 2007 featuring South Philadelphia; an art exhibition at the Art Institute of Philadelphia, and a range of special community presentations. Also completed were two guided walking tours of each of the neighborhoods led by resident/citizen guides.

The following programs were successfully completed:

- **Content Collection** - The “Share Your Favorite Photo” workshop series were renamed the “Your Place and Mine” event series, and held on two consecutive Saturdays in the fall of 2008 as part of a History Fair. One was held on November 3<sup>rd</sup> at the Queen Village Neighborhood Association, and a second on November 10<sup>th</sup> at St. Michaels Church in Northern Liberties. In each neighborhood attendees had the opportunity to contribute photos to PhilaPlace by bringing in favorite pictures and having them scanned on site. Oral histories were audio recorded in one-on-one interviews with HSP staff, and stories complete with show-and-tell items were recorded by the City of Philadelphia’s Department of Records videographers. To develop a festival atmosphere, each venue featured a popcorn machine, a map of the neighborhood so that people could locate places of personal interest, and prizes such as free memberships, books, City Records photographs, and calendars. A total of 74 participants attended and elderly residents, often accompanied by family members, predominated. Press releases and flyers announcing and reporting on the events were sent to the print media, including community papers and the *Philadelphia Inquirer*. Follow up stories ran in the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the *South Philadelphia Review*, and the *Star/Home News* (covers Northern Liberties/Fishtown). Journalist Elizabeth Fiedler of WHYY public radio attended the Northern Liberties History Fair day and conducted interviews with elderly residents which were later broadcast and posted on the station’s website.
- **Art Institute Photographic exhibition** - In collaboration with HSP and Philadelphia’s Department of Records, The Art Institute of Philadelphia hosted the exhibit, “*Philadelphia Stories: Yours, Mine, Ours.*” A public reception took place on Friday, December 5th, 2008 from 4:30 to 8 pm and a gallery talk with the exhibit curator and professor at the Art Institute, Maria DiElsi, took place on the evening of January 23. The exhibit was designed as a unique look at the people of the city’s neighborhoods through images drawn from the historic photo archives of the City of Philadelphia and the Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP). The exhibition opened on December 4th, 2008

and ran through January 23, 2009 in the 1622 Chestnut Street Gallery of The Art Institute of Philadelphia in Center City. Many of the photographs were drawn from HSP's **PhilaPlace** collection and introduced the PhilaPlace project. Under headings like, "*we eat and drink*," "*we serve community and country*," and "*we pray and we play*," the exhibit showcased images that were both playful and serious, nostalgic and contemporary. Two video clips that would later become part of the PhilaPlace website were shown. These were interviews with Philadelphians telling the stories of their families and neighborhoods to provide a living link between past and present. The exhibition was open to the public for free.

- **PhilaPlace Teacher Workshops** - Two workshops were held at HSP in May 2009. The first, "Exploring Ethnic History with Map Models," introduced teachers to Geographic Information Systems (GIS) mapping and showed how it can be a valuable tool to assess immigration and ethnic change over time. The second, "Mapping Our History," suggested approaches for developing local history mapping lessons and discussed ways to incorporate immigration and oral history into such projects. A total of 35 teachers and other public history professionals attended.
- **Senior Citizen Mapping Workshop** - Held at the Stiffel Senior Center in South Philadelphia on July 9, 2009, anthropologists, Rakhmiel Peltz and Rachel Reynolds, and regional planner Amy Hiller from the University of Pennsylvania who were on the PhilaPlace advisory committee, conducted one-on-one interviews with a group of seniors who could speak English and who had lived in a South Philadelphia neighborhood for a long period of time. The PhilaPlace team had to use paper maps to communicate, rather than computers and the Google mapping feature, because the computers at the Center were too slow. After interviewing the seniors and mapping their routes, Hillier's students and HSP's interns recreated them on the computer. The seniors were excited by the event and were able to map daily routes and sites they used growing up in the neighborhood.
- **Introduction to PhilaPlace Workshop** - This workshop was held on January 27, 2010 at HSP whereby members of the public were taught how to use the "share my story" feature on the Website. PhilaPlace project director and project coordinator Melissa Mandell demonstrated the use of the interactive map, how to access audio and video clips, how to create tours, and how to view historical records. Admission was free and 40 people attended.
- **Public History Lectures / Events** – Over the course of the PhilaPlace project HSP was able to coordinate a number of its regular public programs with themes related to PhilaPlace. These included: the history of neon lighting in Philadelphia (April 2009), a tribute the Penn Treaty elm tree (March 2010), the *Global Philadelphia* book launch (April 2010), a talk and music presentation about the history of the Puerto Rican community in Philadelphia (September 2010), and the history of Philly food (April 2011).
- **Walking Tours** – On May 21, 2011, 40 people (20 in each tour) participated in two guided walking tours of South Philadelphia and Northern Liberties. Each tour took



approximately 3 hours and covered around 3 to 4 miles of walking distance. A 5.5 x 8.5 inch, 20-page walking tour guide was made available to each participant. The guide was researched and written by Nathaniel Popkin, a local writer/artist/urban historian, with input by residents. This material is available for download from the PhilaPlace website, and can be used to develop a self-guided tour.

Each tour was delivered by ‘citizen guides.’ The South Philadelphia tour, held in the morning was called the “Territory of Dreams” and began in front of Shank’s luncheonette concluding at lunchtime in the heart of the Italian Market. The tour of the Northern Liberties “Building on Ruins” began in front of the Edgar Allen Poe House and ended in front of the Al-Aqsa Mosque. Stops included the German Society of Pennsylvania, the Latvian Society Social Club, and St. Andrew’s Russian Orthodox Cathedral. In addition, participants learned about once-bustling Marshall Street where Jewish merchants sold live fish, poultry, produce, and baked goods.

### 2.3 Marketing

The press release announcing the NEH/IMLS grant was distributed online to over 80 contacts on September 27, 2007. About a year later, a press release announcing the *Your Place and Mine* exhibition at the Art Institute was distributed on September 15, 2008. HSP contracted with Barbara Link at the Melior Group, a marketing and communications professional to develop a marketing and communications plan that included introducing the website to the wider Philadelphia community, and attracting neighborhood audiences to the website. The communications plan was completed in June of 2008 and key message points were developed for use with the press and other public events.

Prior to the launch a flyer was prepared that outlined PhilaPlace and was distributed both on site at HSP and within the wider community. A comprehensive press kit was developed to announce the December 9, 2009 launch at City Hall in conjunction with Lauri Cielo, HSP’s Director of Programs and Communications, and emailed to over fifty contacts. As a result of this correspondence and follow up calls, ten members of the press attended the event. Over 5,000 5 ½ x 8 ½ inch color postcards were also mailed to key community contacts that both served the purpose of an invitation and as an advertisement of the PhilaPlace site. An email version was also sent to HSP’s then list of round 5,000 e-subscribers.

The Melior group worked hard to include news of PhilaPlace in neighborhood newsletters, community centers, churches, schools and other local gathering spots; and these efforts along with all the rest resulted in a stupendous launch party officiated by Mayor Michael Nutter and attended by over 450 people.

Lime Projects (Laris Kreslins), a firm that specializes in social messaging was contracted to research and identify social media outlets for audiences, promote and reach out to social media outlets, and communicate about PhilaPlace. As their report (Appendix A) notes, although the company was able to suggest some changes before the launch to the site to make the information more social-media friendly—most notably by including the blog—it was recognized that the technology had developed too late to take full advantage of the oncoming wave of “viral”

marketing and communications. More information on the Lime Projects findings can be found in this report under Assessments.

A full list of the press releases, blogs and press attention generated for PhilaPlace throughout the run of the grant and onwards can be found on the website under the “blog” tab.

#### 2.4. Changes to the Technology

A number of changes were made to the technology of the PhilaPlace Website. Primarily, the decision was made not to use Fedora, but rather Collective Access as the digital asset management system, and Google Maps as the geographic interface – both open source solutions. Also, recognizing that at the time of writing the original application that social media had not yet emerged, a blog was added.

The project’s main design can be broken down into three primary aspects: Collective Access, an open-source digital asset management system (DAMS); Google Maps API, an open-source mapping function with base map tiles; and a custom PHP “middleware” that integrates these features and serves them to the client browser.

Collective Access represents a mature open-source platform with a wide user base, including art museums, film archives, and historic sites. It is supported and maintained by its creator, Whirl-i-gig, who customized the installation for *PhilaPlace* to support a myriad of metadata and a few features not included in the base install, such as enhanced use of sets to better support a neighborhood tour feature. The strengths of Collective Access—and hence the reason for its selection as part of the *PhilaPlace* design solution instead of Fedora—include strong support for many media types (particularly video), a flexible metadata model, and reliability. In addition, the choice reflected the fact that Collective Access is a truly free and open source platform (though support contracts are available for organizations that might want them).

Google Maps API needs little explanation, beyond that it not only provides the accurate and speedy delivery of map tiles, but also can be used with any properly tiled map. In the case of *PhilaPlace*, the original plan of integrating four historic map layers into the same map interface, was realized. These additional map layers were tiled and served up through a third party historical organization, the Greater Philadelphia GeoHistory Network (managed and operated by the Athenaeum of Philadelphia), who partnered with HSP on the project, and the GIS mapping was completed, as initially planned, by Amy Hiller and her students at the School of Design at the University of Pennsylvania.

The Custom PHP “middleware,” designed by Night Kitchen Interactive, consists of a robust series of server-side scripts that manage the tasks of mapping interpretative metadata and media from the CMS onto the map layers. The scripts allow visitors to navigate, browse, and filter interpretative information by map, topic and collection. The collection view shows the strengths of using Collective Access as the DAMS because all media types (images, audio and video) can be browsed, filtered and sorted; with each media object having its own detail page with caption, credits, and keywords. In sum, these three “views” support a unique curatorial opportunity to create multiple interpretive paths to the same content, thereby encouraging exploration according to personal user preferences.

## 2.5 Changes to Staff

The PhilaPlace project was conceived and implemented at HSP by Joan Saverino, the Assistant Director of Education under the direction of the Senior Director of Education Katherine Wilson. In May of 2008 Dr. Wilson left HSP to become a member of the history faculty at Georgia State University, and her position was not replaced due to a significant cut in education subsidies for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania's Department of Education. At that juncture as well as being the Director of PhilaPlace, Dr. Saverino became the Director of Education and Outreach at HSP. The department was led by Tamara Gaskell, Ph.d. There was some disruption to PhilaPlace because some duties previously performed by Dr. Wilson were picked up by Dr. Saverino. Most notably, the trolley and self-guided walking tours were delayed by more than a year.

During the development of PhilaPlace a number of key personnel were appointed on a contractual basis including Media Coordinator, Dwight Swanson, and Project Coordinator, Melissa Mandell. They were assisted by a number of interns supported by Drexel University and the Samuel S. Fels Foundation: Amanda Zellner (6 months in 2009), Ian Charlton (6 months in 2010), Anastasia Saverino (10 weeks in 2009 and no relation of Dr. Saverino). A list of support staff and volunteers can be found under the 'about' tab on the PhilaPlace website.

PhilaPlace was launched in December of 2009, and the NEH / IMLS grant completed by the end of HSP's financial year on June 30, 2010.

Unfortunately when the grant ended HSP was unable to maintain the two full-time positions that had been dedicated primarily to PhilaPlace development. Joan Saverino left HSP in August 2010, and shortly thereafter (October) Melissa Mandell took up another position at the University of Philadelphia.

In December of 2010 Beth Twiss Houting assumed the position of Senior Director of Programs and Services. Under her direction, HSP has been re-thinking how to ensure that new content is regularly added to the site going forward.

## **3. Accomplishments**

As the above report on activities shows, all the goals as originally set out in the grant application were accomplished. From December 9, 2009, to May 26, 2011, there were 72,143 visits to [www.philaplace.org](http://www.philaplace.org). Of those 55,192 were unique visits. During this time span, the site averaged 135 visits/day or 945 visits/week.

As the summative evaluation shows (see under Evaluation), visitors gave the site extremely high ratings with averages ranging from 4.47 to 4.88 in a 5-point scale. For example, 91% said they had few difficulties with navigating the site, 89% said they understood the maps, and 96% enjoyed the use of color and graphics. More importantly 97% said they found the material interesting and clear. As one person wrote: "The concept of the site is very interesting and has inspired me to see more of the city that I have overlooked previously;" and another: "Not only can you learn about places important to the history of Philadelphia, but you can find quaint little stores that had personal or private meanings to the people who lived in the area." 96% said they would visit again.

The public programs in all their various forms have also been very successful. We know, for example, that 16% of visitors are educators who use the PhilaPlace material in the classroom, and a portion of these people have attended teacher workshops. The public history lectures / events average around 60 people (some as high at 120+) and workshops average around 20 people.

PhilaPlace received wonderful formal recognition from the cultural community when it received an honorable mention at the highly competitive Museums and the Web 2010 conference hosted by the Archives & Museum Informatics. Museums and the Web is the most prestigious of the annual Web site conference awards that recognizes great work in the field of culture, science, and heritage online. PhilaPlace received the award in the exhibitions category, which receives the most submissions of any of the competitive categories. The judges complimented the website's technology (i.e. map interface), the "share your story" feature, and the education section. As one judge commented: "*PhilaPlace uses technology to support the experience, rather than dominate it.*" For more information see:

[http://conference.archimuse.com/forum/congratulations\\_mw2010\\_best\\_web\\_winners](http://conference.archimuse.com/forum/congratulations_mw2010_best_web_winners)

### **3. Evaluation**

#### **3.1 Initial Visitation and Social Media Assessment**

A few weeks after the site launched, (December 2009) Lime Projects (refer back to the Marketing section of this report) analyzed online traffic and assessed the possibility of reaching the benchmarks the PhilaPlace team set. These were: (a) to attract 500 individuals to take tours, (b) to attract 100 teachers to visit the education section, and (c) to have 100 user-contributed stories. Lime Projects made comparisons with other cultural content sites and discovered that shortly after the launch people spent approximately 4.08 minutes on the site. The average time, based on other examples, is closer to 2 – 3 minutes. For a full copy of the Report see Appendix A.

In hindsight, this surge in interest can be accounted by the large amount of advance marketing prior to the launch. Now almost eighteen months later, the average time spent is around 2 minutes – in keeping with the norm of other cultural organizations. The benchmarks set by the PhilaPlace team have been partially successful. As of April 2011, 515 people have taken a tour, 16% of visitors are teachers and one can assume at least 100 of these have used the materials in class, and 78 of the projected 100 contributors have added a story.

#### **3.2 Mapping Assessment**

Due to the delay in the initial launch of the site, the participatory mapping workshops to test the interactive mapping concepts were postponed until March 15, 2010. Held at the Goldstein Computer Classroom at the Van Pelt Library at the University of Pennsylvania, a questionnaire was administered to 20 participants by Minda Borun, the PhilaPlace assessment consultant. The purpose was to test the user-experience of the mapping features. Nine people were aged between

21 and 30 years old, five were between 31 and 40 years, two were between 41 and 50 years, and four were between 51 and 60 years. There were nine men and eleven women. Three were African American, thirteen were of European descent, and four were Asian.

Sitting in front of computers loaded with the PhilaPlace website, the program started with a self-guided questionnaire. At the end of the session a brief discussion was held about how the site could be improved. A copy of the map evaluations valuation is attached to this report (Appendix B.), but in summary: All of those asked liked the topic and the majority found the design aesthetically appealing. They felt the overall site was easy to navigate, and did not encounter any technical difficulties. Most saw the pull-down menu of maps, however lots of people did not see the “show streets” button. People found the legends useful. 28% tried the “add a story” button, although no one did. All but one person said they would return to the site. The one “maybe” came with the caveat that it would depend on if his neighborhood was added.

Based on this feedback, a number of changes were made to the PhilaPlace site, including: placing the zoom option on the maps in a more visible location, making sure you do not lose your place when exploring content in the “take a tour” feature, making the “streets” option more visible, and making the “add a story” feature easier to find.

### 3.3 Summative Evaluation

After the site had been operable for at least three months an interactive questionnaire was developed by consultant Minda Borun, to assess user’s reactions to the PhilaPlace site. The summative evaluation was based on 214 visitors who completed the survey between March 26 and September 8, 2010. For a breakdown of their demographics refer to the Audiences section of this report.

In order to understand the use of PhilaPlace, it was important to understand how respondents treated online technology in general. 72% said they checked Web-based information “several times a day,” with 94% doing so via a broadband connection. When comparing their website experiences, PhilaPlace received extremely high ratings of between 4.47 – 4.88 and 91% claimed to have no difficulty navigating the site. Understanding the navigation buttons, maps, location pins, links, use of graphics and color, all rated above 89% in satisfaction. The few difficulties that were encountered were with the “tour” portion of the site because they felt that 50 – 60 stops were too many and it was recognized as a downloadable activity, the experience was in fact not interactive.

In hindsight, had HSP been able to forecast the explosion of geo-located mobile technology, the tour component would have been developed in some type of mobile application that can be continually updated and include other reference points such as schools restaurants, and continually changing places of interest. Indeed, a mobile application is being developed at present, with an intended launch by the end of 2010.

When people were asked what they would like to change on the site, most responded by wanting “more content.” Because the grant-funded first phase concentrated on only two neighborhoods in depth (Northern Liberties / Kensington and Southwark/South Philadelphia) people who did not

live in those areas have been disappointed. For example, one visitor commented: “My neighborhood (West Philadelphia) is not included.” This is an issue that is addressed under the Continuation of the Project section of this report.

A full copy of the evaluation is attached to this report (Appendix C.), but as the evaluator, Minda Borun wrote in her report: “PhilaPlace is a very successful and well-constructed Website that is highly valued by its users.”

## **5. Audiences**

The best indication of PhilaPlace’s online audience can be found in the results of the survey that formed the basis of the summative evaluation referenced above. Of course, these demographics only pertain to those people who took the time to complete the survey.

The majority of the participants were fairly evenly spread according to age, with the majority being between 50-59 years (22%) and 30-39 years (21%). 19% were aged between 40-49, 18% were between 20-29 years, and 17% were over 60 years of age. More than half were women (58%), and had college degrees (34%) and/or graduate/ professional degrees (47%). Not surprisingly, most were also residents of a Philadelphia neighborhood (72%) and had a personal interest in history (42%).

Given the cultural diversity reflected in the content and the amount of community involvement, it was interesting to note that 80% were of white or European descent. 7% were African-American, 2% Hispanic/Latin, and 4% Asian. This lack of ethnic diversity does not match those who took place in the Mapping evaluation, whereby 65% of participants were of European descent, and 15% were African-American, and 20% Asian. Perhaps in hindsight, the evaluation could have further broken down ethnic groupings. Given that much of the history in both neighborhoods centers around European immigration in the 19<sup>th</sup> century - Polish, Italian, Russian, etc – the criteria of “European descent” would apply to a large number of people living in those communities. Also, the Asian citizens living around the 9<sup>th</sup> street market of South Philadelphia are fairly recent arrivals, and we know from our partnership with organizations such as the Southeast Asian Mutual Assistance Coalition (SEAMAC) that language continues to remain a barrier, particularly to the first wave of immigrants who are now elderly. This age group also finds working with computers less intuitive and may not realize that the history of their community can be found on the internet.

## **6. Continuation of the Project**

Since the end of the grant period, PhilaPlace continues to receive around 1,000 visitors a week, and interest in related programming remains high as was recently demonstrated with a fully subscribed walking tour held on May 21, 2011. In April 2010 HSP and three departments of Temple University (the School of Journalism, College of Education, and the Neighborhood Learning Center) received a Provost Seed grant to supervise students over twenty-four months to gather and add more stories about Philadelphia’s neighborhoods. To date about 120 new stories have been added. HSP is also currently working with Drexel University’s Department of History

and Politics to employ a graduate student, David Ahern, for 6 months to add material on the Germantown area of the City. In addition, HSP re-employed Ian Carlton, a former Drexel intern/graduate for months to begin adding content on West Philadelphia in conjunction with the University of Pennsylvania archives.

Beginning in July 2011 a new project funded by the NEH will help process and digitize 21 collections related to ethnic and immigrant history. The stories that come from these collections relating to Philadelphia neighborhoods, will be added to the PhilaPlace Website in 2012.

More strategically, HSP held a meeting on May 17, 2011 with over ten other organizations involved in developing geo-location history websites in Philadelphia, such as the Greater Philadelphia Preservation Alliance, the City of Philadelphia Department of Records, the Athenaeum of Philadelphia, the Mural Arts Program, etc. The purpose of the meeting was to ascertain whether it would be possible for PhilaPlace to act as a central repository for historical content that could be harvested by other organizations for their own sites/uses. It was agreed that an application program interface (API ) would need to be developed to allow sharing of information between users/organizations/platforms. In addition, effort would need to be given to disambiguation – or the standardization of terms for place names in Philadelphia. For example, the “Italian Market” is also known as the “9<sup>th</sup> Street Market,” while “Washington West” is also known as “Midtown Village.” These organizations have agreed to join the PhilaPlace Advisory Board and jointly seek funding to work on shared metadata standards as a next step.

Finally, working with the website designers, Night Kitchen Interactive, HSP presented a paper at the Museum in the Web Conference (Philadelphia, April 6-9, 2011) called: “PhilaPlace to AnyPlace: Building a Reusable Community Platform for Mapping and Sharing History.” ([http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2011/programs/philaplace\\_to\\_anyplace\\_building\\_a\\_reusable\\_c](http://conference.archimuse.com/mw2011/programs/philaplace_to_anyplace_building_a_reusable_c)) In this paper, HSP and Night Kitchen proposed making the PhilaPlace technology available to other cities and organizations who wished to use it. To date, the Chicago Center for Architecture (CCA) have decided to adopt the AnyPlace / PhilaPlace platform, and a city in Australia has shown interest. Part of the AnyPlace agreement allows upgrades and improvements made by other users to be back-ported to PhilaPlace. In such a way HSP hopes to receive upgrades and improvements in to the PhilaPlace site. The mobile guided tour application that CCA is including in its build, for example, will be added to PhilaPlace by 2012.

## **7. Long Tem Impact**

PhilaPlace will continue to provide HSP and other organizations interested in mapping the history of Philadelphia’s neighborhoods a central place to gather, share, and disseminate information. It will also provide Philadelphia residents, scholars, and repositories of history such as HSP an opportunity to meet online, share stories, and communicate. Over time HSP hopes to expand across all of the neighborhoods of Philadelphia and sustain the program through developing a consortium of organizations with related missions.

As HSP continues to process, conserve, and interpret its own collection, the stories that speak to local histories will be added to PhilaPlace where possible – thereby expanding access to HSP’s unique content. One direct result of the PhilaPlace project is that HSP has also adopted

Collective Access as its central digital asset management system (DAMS) and 21,000 digital images are now available on [www.hsp.org](http://www.hsp.org). By sharing the same DAMS, HSP is able to easily share images and information between the PhilaPlace website, organizational website, and other technologies.

Similarly, providing the PhilaPlace / AnyPlace platform to other cities and organizations across the World, will allow HSP to continually upgrade and improve the PhilaPlace technology and create a community of users.

## **8. Grant Products**

Website: [www.philaplace.org](http://www.philaplace.org)

*Philadelphia Stories: Yours Mine & Ours* exhibition invitation card 6 x 4 ½ inches full color produced by the Art Institute of Philadelphia in partnership with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania / PhilaPlace and the City of Philadelphia Department of Records. (5,000 distributed in October 2009)

*Philadelphia Stories: Yours Mine & Ours* exhibition catalogue produced by the Art Institute of Philadelphia in partnership with the Historical Society of Pennsylvania / PhilaPlace and the City of Philadelphia Department of Records. Curated by Maria DiElsi (produced December 5, 2008)

*PhilaPlace Information Flyer*. 11 x 8 inches, full color, developed by the Historical Society of Pennsylvania. Distributed onsite and within local neighborhoods.

*PhilaPlace launch invitation card* 5 ½ x 8 ½ inches, two-sided, full color. Distributed to approximately 5,000 in June – August 2009.

*PhilaPlace Key Messaging Points*. A communication guide developed by the Melior Group (produced September 14, 2009).

*Cataloguing and Uploading Content to Philaplace.org*. A user guide prepared by Melissa Mandell (produced August 13, 2010)

*South Philadelphia: Territory of Dreams* walking tour guide created by Nathaniel Popkin. 20 pages/ two color. (produced May 2011)





## APPENDIX A.

**Date:** January 12th, 2010 – Edited January 18, 2010

**Client:** Historical Society of PA

**Contact:** Joan Saverino, Melissa Mandell, Lauri Cielo

**Project:** Social Media/Outreach Consulting for Philaplace.org

### OVERVIEW/WHAT WE WERE CONTRACTED TO DO

Lime Projects was contracted to contribute the following services for HSP's launch of Philaplace.org:

- Research/Identify social media outlets for audiences
- Promote and reach out to social media outlets
- Communications messaging

### SUMMARY

Since Oct/Nov, in addition to the above tasks Lime Projects has worked collaboratively with HSP to ensure the Philaplace.org site complies with social media push elements to ensure users can share content easily. Though we were able to make necessary changes to the site development before launch, there is still more to be done to make sure users can easily share and spread content that is contained within Philaplace.org. If additional funding were secured there are more in-depth and automated ways to incorporate social media into the project, which could improve the viral coefficient of the project substantially. Additional funding could also simplify manual processes currently being handled in house at HSP, such as notifying users that their stories have been posted.

Another key component of Lime Projects services was the outreach research and messaging. Our response was roughly 2% of the targets outlined (see attached). In most cases a 1% response rate is standard on most projects. When we say response, this means people that wrote back, came to the launch event, wrote a post, sent messages through twitter, facebook etc.

Finally, we were able to make connections directly with community members interested in a continued relationship with the Philaplace project. Most notably the City of Philadelphia's Rec Department, as well as Young and Involved Philadelphians (YIP).

One issue with the project in general is that user generated sites are a difficult animal to deal with. In most cases, unless there are prizes or other incentives involved it's hard to get users to take the time to write and share stories. We had similar issues with the 21stcenturyabe site.

As far as the 5 month goals outlined by HSP, Lime Projects believes if the trends continue, and some of the additional recommendations are implemented these benchmarks will be met or exceeded. To recap:

- To attract 500 individuals to take tours related to PhilaPlace including trolley, audio, web, and self-guided tours (approximately 75 in-person tours and 425 electronic tours).
- To attract 100 teachers to visit the education section of the PhilaPlace web site.
- To have 100 user-contributed stories including photographs, videos, audio files, and text submitted to the PhilaPlace web site and post 50 of these to the site.

## ASSESSMENTS

*Traffic:* In general the traffic generated so far has been substantial as compared to other cultural content sites Lime Projects has worked on. This traffic is attributed to the planning and work done by HSP, as well as the work by additional consultants like Barbara Link. While traffic peaked at the launch of the project, the analytics show that the time on site continues to be quite high. We can interpret this as a high level of interest from users clicking around on the stories and exploring the site deeper. In the *future opportunities* section there are some suggestions how we can increase traffic and usage of the site. For the launch, we cast our outreach net wide to find users. The increase in time spent on the site means our audience is the audience more interested in the content provided.

If we continue to reach out to different groups, we will continue to generate more readers and, hopefully, more user generated content.

*Traffic from launch to date as of 1/19/10:*

10,862 Visits (of those 8,154 are unique)

47,339 Page Views

4.36 Pages per visit

Avg Time on Site 4:08

We assume the average "time on site" based on other projects we've worked on is closer to 2-3 minutes.

*Traffic sources:*

38.39% Direct Traffic

39.74% Referring Sites

21.86% Search Engines

*Top referrers:*

Direct (meaning traffic directly from people typing the URL into a browser)

Google

Philly.com

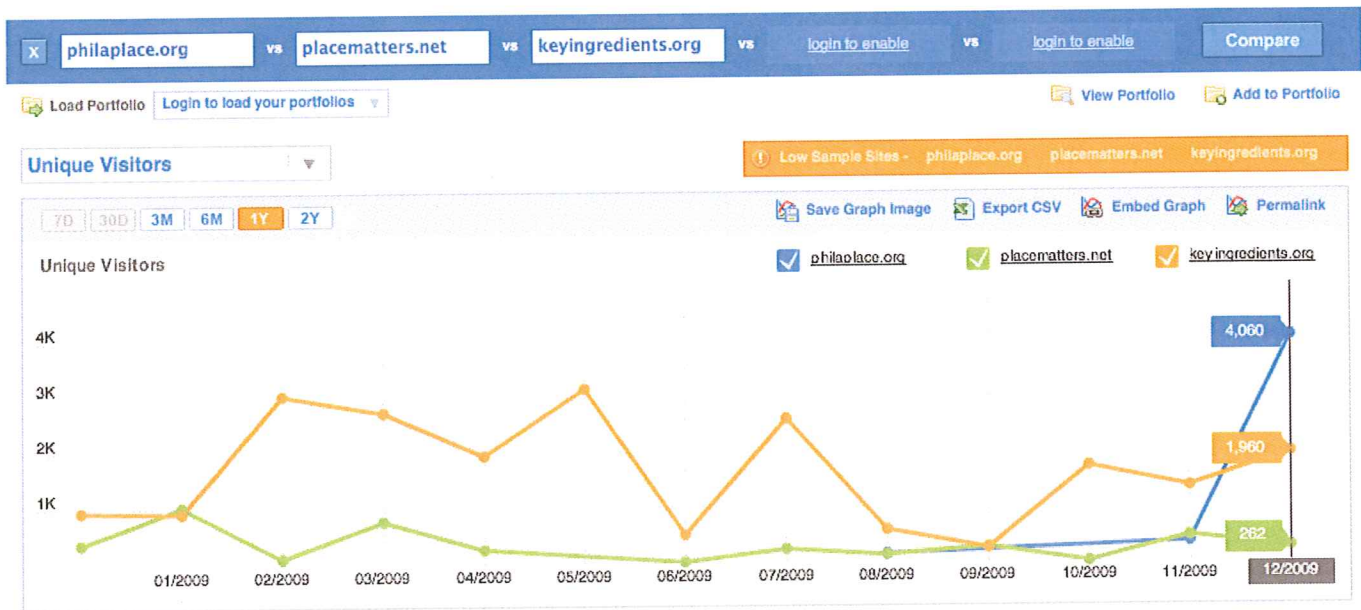
Hsp.org

Facebook

*Comparisons to other sites:* What follows are some general traffic comparison graphs. These numbers are public and might differ from the official traffic numbers.

Direct link here:

<http://siteanalytics.compete.com/philaplace.org+placematters.net+keyingredients.org/>



\* traffic from Compete.com is not as accurate as Google Analytics. We use exact Google Analytics for the actual traffic numbers. Compete just offers general comparisons.

**Interest Level (Responses):** As expressed above the response to the outreach has been about 2% of outlets contacted.

*Responses of note include:*

Thrillist  
 Philebrity  
 Geekadelphia  
 Brett Mapp  
 Alain Joinville at the Rec Department  
 Jesse Celness of the Census Bureau  
 Brad Baldia  
 Philly Art Blog  
 Technically Philly  
 Ken Millano  
 Inga Safron (Inquirer)  
 German Society  
 Next American City Magazine

*Chatter (web searches/Technoratti [a blog search tool] /Twitter Searches)*

Inquirer  
<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/local/78847182.html>

Philebrity  
<http://www.philebrity.com/2010/01/08/contribute-to-philaplace-a-project-by-the-historical-society/>



Thrillist

"Click Section" <http://www.thrillist.com/maps/philaplaceorg>

Technically Philly

<http://technicallyphilly.com/2009/12/07/tnt-historical-societys-interactive-philaplace-web-site-needs-your-stories>

Planphilly

<http://planphilly.com/philaplaceorg-wants-hear-your-stories>

Art Blog

<http://theartblog.org/2009/12/philaplace-is-our-place-especially-southwark-and-nolibs/comment-page-1/>

Philaculture.org

<http://www.philaculture.org/category/topic/diversity>

[http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-](http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Pennsylvania&month=0911&week=b&msg=LDt1mHQ924laZ%2BmbdEcFbQ)

[Pennsylvania&month=0911&week=b&msg=LDt1mHQ924laZ%2BmbdEcFbQ](http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vx&list=H-Pennsylvania&month=0911&week=b&msg=LDt1mHQ924laZ%2BmbdEcFbQ)

Project Basho

<http://www.projectbasho.org/newsletters/>

Museum Blogs Forum

<http://www.museumblogs.org/detail/52074-forum-research-and-resources-for-museum-education>

Next American City

<http://americancity.org/daily/entry/1963/>

Myowntimemachine

<http://myowntimemachine.wordpress.com/page/2/>

Assembling History

<http://assemblinghistory.blogspot.com/2009/09/philadelphia-history-on-web.html>

Nolibs Business Owners Assoc

<http://www.nolibs.com/news.asp>

<http://marielwaloff.wordpress.com/>

Yards Twitter Feed

<https://twitter.com/YardsBrew/status/6464775329>

*Twitter Notes:*

Listed 16 Times (a sign that the feed is relevant)

Over 175 followers to the HistoricalPA twitter feed.

*Important people/high quality/credible twitter feeds following HSP:*

@foodadelphia  
@Phillyfunguide  
@felsinstitute  
@southphillykids  
@BTMapp  
@citypaper  
@canarymegan  
@inliquidart  
@mindtv  
@LarryMendte  
@tweetupphilly  
@PhillySmurfette  
@wassilyk  
@taxgirl  
@jimshreds  
@PhillyMAPP  
@thefoodtrust  
@philaculture  
@tettermer  
@eastern\_star  
@anniemal  
@dinnerpartydnld

*What denotes success in regards to social media:*

- 1) Followers
- 2) Quality followers
- 3) RT (retweets)
- 4) Direct links in blogs
- 5) Site traffic
- 6) Time spent on site
- 7) User submitted stories
- 8) Getting listed
- 9) Facebook Fans/Friends
- 10) In general, when you mention Philaplace to someone and they say "Yeah I've heard of that!"

Lime Projects Projects

@21stCenturyAbe = 811 Followers  
@hauntedpoe = 242 Followers  
@hpihilly = 353 Followers  
@kidproject = 1656 Followers

Other comps:

@officialsouthst = 717 Followers  
@RosenbachMuseum = 889  
@philagrafika = 74

## FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES:

- Surveys
- Google Ad Words
- VERY select banner advertising
- More one on one outreach
- Additional small events, happy hours, etc.
- Partner with First Person Arts, at least to access their lists etc. Joint event.
- Call to Action Postcards
- A prize/contest to encourage submissions
- Get a table at the Flower Show, set up some computers so people can input stories on the spot

## **APPENDIX B.**

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA  
PHILAPLACE WEB SITE  
Map Section Evaluation  
Minda Borun, Museum Solutions**



---

**HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF PENNSYLVANIA**  
**PHILAPLACE WEB SITE**  
**Map Section Evaluation**  
**Minda Borun, Museum Solutions**  
**March 1010.**

---

**Introduction**

PhilaPlace is an interactive web-based experience for people who are interested in the history and culture of Philadelphia neighborhoods. A special workshop was held in the library at the University of Pennsylvania on March 15, 2010 in order to evaluate the Map section of the website. Twelve subjects attended the session. A self-guided questionnaire was developed to allow people to explore the Map section and report on their experience. At the end of the workshop a brief discussion was held in which people were asked what they liked about the site and Map section and what changes they would like to see. One person who was not able to find the workshop was sent the questionnaire by email and returned it the next day. In addition, seven subjects from the staff of The Franklin Institute Science Museum reviewed the website and the Map section on March 16 and 17 and filled out the questionnaire. This report is based on 20 questionnaires and the wrap-up discussion.

**Results**

**PART 1—  
DEMOGRAPHICS**

**AGE**

*Subjects ranged in age from 21-60 with the majority in the 21-31 year old age group.*

	N	%
<b>21 – 30</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>45%</b>
31 – 40	5	25%
41 – 50	2	10%
51 - 60	4	20%
Over 60		
Totals	20	100%

## GENDER

*Fifty-five percent of the participants were female and 45% male.*

	N	%
Male	9	45%
Female	11	55%
Totals	20	100%

## EDUCATION

*The majority of participants have a college degree. Thirty-five percent have a graduate or professional degree.*

	N	%
Less than high school		
High school diploma	1	5%
<b>College degree</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60%</b>
Graduate/professional degree	7	35%
Totals	20	100%

## PROFESSIONAL POSITION

*Most of the subjects are residents of Philadelphia.*

	N	%
HSP Member	1	5%
HSP Advisor	1	5%
Student	3	15%
<b>Resident of Philadelphia neighborhood</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>70%</b>
Resident of local area, but outside Phila.	2	10%
Other	4	20%

Other:

Museum professional (2)

School administrator (1)

No answer (1)

Philadelphia Neighborhoods:

West Philadelphia (5)

Fairmont (1)

Center City (3)

Overbrook (1)

Queen Village (3)

Fishtown (1)

Wynnefield (1)

Swarthmore (1)

**ETHNICITY**

*The sample was 65% Caucasian, 15% African/American and 20% Asian*

	N	%
Black or African/American	3	15%
<b>White or European</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>65%</b>
Hispanic/Latino		
Asian/Pacific Islander	4	20%
Native American/Eskimo	0	
Mixed Ethnicity	0	
Other	0	
Totals	20	100%

**INTEREST IN PHILADELPHIA HISTORY AND CULTURE**

*Most people had both a personal and professional interest in Philadelphia.*

	N	%
Personal interest	8	40%
Professional interest		
<b>Personal and professional interest</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>60%</b>
Other	0	
Totals	20	100%

## USE OF WEBSITES FOR INFORMATION

*Almost everyone uses websites several times a day for information.*

	N	%
Several times per day	19	95%
Once a day	1	5%
2 - 3 times per week	0	
Less than 2 times per week	0	
Totals	20	100%

## PART 2— MAP SECTION REVIEW

Participants were asked to review the pages of the Map section, to indicate what they like and don't like, and to explain anything they don't like.

	N	Like %	Don't Like N	%
PLACES Tab				
Neighborhoods	15	88%	2	12%
<b>Topic</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>		
Contributor	14	82%	3	18%
<b>Take A Tour</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>63%</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>37%</b>
STREETS Tab				
Show Places	16	100%		
4 <sup>th</sup> Street	14	88%	2	12%
9th Street	14	88%	2	12%
<b>I-95</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>75%</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>25%</b>
Wallace Street	13	81%	3	19%
<b>Legend</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>93%</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>7%</b>

*Numbers in ( ) represent the number of respondents giving the same or very similar answers.*

#### **PLACES TAB**

“Didn’t understand at first what “Topic” and “Contributor” tabs do.”

#### ***Neighborhoods***

- “Would love to see (an attempt) at borders around each “neighborhood” historic and modern.”
- “I would rather see a layout similar to “Topics” and “Contributor” instead of a drop-down menu. Then I can see all on one page what my options are.”
- “Provide addresses/cross streets for neighborhoods. It would be beneficial to see an overall map of neighborhoods.”
- “My neighborhood (West Philadelphia) not included.”
- “Zooming in loses context in city for non-natives.”
- “Balloons pile up. Hard to get to ones in the back. Didn’t know you can zoom in. Not obvious.”

#### ***Topic***

- “Better if it opens with no balloons- too junky to begin.”
- “Need more on some neighborhood maps”

#### ***Contributor***

- “Unclear. What does ‘visitors’ mean? Tourists? (2)
- “Does ‘partners’ mean business owners who paid for privilege of being on site?”
- “If more than one contributor tags, what does that mean? So what?”
- “Is it needed? Difficult to use because Historical Society entries are so high.”

#### ***Take a Tour***

- “Loved that from tour. I could go back to specific site on map and also to related info.”
- “50 – 65 stops are too many.”
- “Finding out more loses your place in the tour.”
- “Better ‘next- back’ tabs. Maybe box [?] ‘Forward and back’.”
- “Implies that you will have an interactive experience when in reality it is really just static.”
- “Not enough. Could add more neighborhoods.”

#### **MORE ON THE PLACES TAB**

#### ***Neighborhood:***

##### **What did this category show?**

- “A drop-down menu that lists neighborhood names in Philadelphia areas.” (10)
- “Map/streets of individual neighborhoods.”(3)
- “Locations of contributors in different neighborhoods.”
- “Just a map of the city, zoomed in a little bit.”
- “Schools, transportation, basically what the neighborhood consisted of. Way of life; quality of life of people who lived there.”
- “Unknown- looks like restaurants.”
- “Places of interest by neighborhood.”

Did it show what you expected?

Most people found what they expected with the Places Tab.

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>72%</b>
Somewhat	3	21%
No	1	7%
Totals	14	100%

“I cannot wait to see more places added!” (3)

“I would expect/love it if the balloons showed places contemporary with each map view, e.g. 1895 Bromley.”

“I like the separation into the two major neighborhoods, and prefer it to an alphabetical list.”

“I would have expected to see houses, population, some categories too general and don’t really mean very much.”

“Would like to see more informal names/colloquial names.”

“I didn’t know what to expect. I appreciated the focus on specific neighborhoods.”

“Can tell by looking whether a neighborhood is ‘healthy’ or not. For example: Kensington has few cultural/education buttons.”

#### **Topic:**

#### **What did this category show?**

“A list of topics to select that would filter the results in the map.”(11)

“Contributor locations that fall under a specific category.”

“Lots of overlap. Is that good? Maybe, maybe not. Multiple search paths, not categories.”

“It expanded and explained what I felt was missing in the previous [section]. I don’t know that I would have chosen that menu option to find an expansion of the neighborhood list.”

“Various issues regarding urban society.”

“Makes for interests [?] that fell into partial [?] categories.”

“ ‘Places’ related to topic categories.”

#### **Did it show what you expected?**

Most people found what they expected under Topic.

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>88%</b>
Somewhat	2	12%
No		
Totals	16	100%

“Pretty much .” (2)  
 “More topics than I expected.” (2)  
 “Some key words kind of a ‘stretch’.”  
 “‘Oral Interviews’ and ‘Verbal & Artistic Expression’ don’t quite fit as ‘Topics’. I still think this is the best place for them.”  
 “I am not sure what the ‘Oral Interviews’ and ‘Work’ tabs refer to.”  
 “This will get better with more contributors.”  
 “I liked the issues but didn’t understand, at first, how to use this tab. Once I ‘got it’, I found it very informative.”  
 “Yes, but I expected to see more. For instance, if there is nothing tagged ‘health’ in Northern Liberties, can I assume shortage of health services, or just a lack of mapped information?”  
 [I expected the] “sports complex which makes up for an important attraction of South Philadelphia.”

### **Contributor**

#### **What did this category show?**

“It shows where the information came from.”  
 “Locations of different contributors by type.”  
 “A list of contributors to PhilaPlace that you can use to filter the results on the map.”  
 “Who provided the information? There is no explanation of who the partners/visitors are. Visitors to where/what?” (2)  
 “Who provided what contribution in a region.”  
 “Landmarks with stories contributed by a certain group.”  
 “A selection of contribution types.”  
 “Historical Society of PA, partners, visitors.”  
 “Neighbors/entities who helped to make PhilaPlace happen.”  
 “Contributors who gathered information on various sites and topics.”  
 “Topics by who added them.”  
 “Those who contributed to this website. It acknowledges the Partners, the visitors and the Historical Society of Philadelphia.”  
 “Who originated copy/links.”  
 “Author”  
 “The different acting groups that are currently essential to the existence of the website and their targeted audience.”  
 “Love that you can contribute your story. Once it’s on you can tell your friends and neighbors that it’s there.”  
 “How will you screen potential stories that are added?”

#### **Did it show what you expected?**

	N	%
Yes	12	75%
No	4	25%
Totals	16	100%

What is a partner/ a visitor? (3)

“There are less [sic] visitors than HSPA or partners. It would be neat to learn more about the visitor... where they live now, if they’ve moved around, etc.”

“SEAMAAC wasn’t on the map.”  
 “Once I clicked on the tabs.”  
 “Multicolored markers... what do those indicate?”

***Tour:***

What did this category show?

“Virtual tours of two neighborhoods.”(10)  
 “Neighborhoods with selected highlighted landmarks.” (4)  
 “This is a neat feature. However I kept trying to use the ‘Media’ button (multiple images) in order to continue my tour. Had to hunt on page for ‘next stop’--tiny.”  
 “Intro copy static. Didn’t ‘show’ anything.”

Did it show what you expected?

*More people did not find what they expected under Tour than with other sections.*

	N	%
Yes	8	62%
Somewhat	1	7%
<b>No</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>31%</b>
Totals	13	100%

“It was great!”  
 “Showed more than I expected.”  
 “Very interesting. Broad range of sites.”  
 “I also like the intro screen that pops up with the explanation before launching the tour.”  
 “I was surprised by the text heavy pop-up box.”  
 “I would like to see more neighborhoods. Also, I’m unsure of the tour route and how it is arranged.”  
 “Pop-up navigation leads to a frustrating experience when you click the ‘more’ button. Hitting ‘back’ doesn’t return you to your original spot in the tour.”  
 “Will other neighborhoods be included in the future?”  
 “I would expect to get a tour of all the areas of the city.”  
 “No. Was expecting lots of links.”  
 “I expected more and/or narrower options.”  
 “No. Expected more curation [?], not all points.”



## STREETS TAB

“Didn’t see it until pointed out” (2)

“Should remove line at bottom of tab when it is ‘in front’.”

### *Show Places*

(no comments)

### *4<sup>th</sup> Street*

“More information than I can ever use, but nice.”

### *9<sup>th</sup> Street*

#### **I – 95**

“Include year in drop-down menu, like other street menus.”

“There are no contributors and it seems there is an absence of history. Also there are no dates for this street to show the lapse of time and effects in the neighborhood.”

### *Wallace Street*

“The ‘Choose a Neighborhood’ tab does not allow me to search streets.”

### *Legend*

“I think the placement could be improved- I found myself constantly scrolling up and down to refer back to it. Reducing the size and having it on the map (like a map drop-down box in the upper right) would be better. Also the “Legend” link in the drop-down box (that opens the pdf of the original map legend) could be better labeled.”

### **General STREETS comments**

“I want to see more streets and I want to see on the page the different types of data I can look up- i.e. no drop-down menu.”

“Fascinating.”

“I think the STREETS tab works as is, but would grow unwieldy with the addition of many more streets to the list.”

“Love this! Fascinating!”

## MORE ON THE STREETS TAB

### **What did the Streets tab show?**

“Showed topics of ethnicity, land use, occupation by decade.” (9)

“Different types of demographics and/or historical data visually represented along a chosen street.” (2)

“Color-coded maps by location.”

“Three – four selected streets. Would be perfect to ‘MapQuest’ streets by name and get a history.”

“S. 4<sup>th</sup>, S. 9<sup>th</sup>, I-95, Wallace.”

“Different types of data points.”

“Wow, there’s a lot of work in that.”

“Your different options.”

“I did not immediately realize this was a tab I could click on. It blends into the background.”

**Could you interpret the maps? If “No” please explain.**

*Everyone could interpret the maps.*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>
No		
Totals	17	100%

“Would have liked more interpretation, e.g. what factors contributed to drastic change in ethnicity on 4<sup>th</sup> Street between 1880 and 1900?”

**Were the legends useful?**

*People found the legends useful.*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100 %</b>
No		
Totals	17	100%

“Essential.”

**Did you see that there was a pull-down menu on the right for maps of different dates?**

*Most people saw the pull-down menu of maps.*

	N	%
Yes	15	88%
No	2	12%
Totals	17	100%

Saw it “only after 20 minutes”.

“Not until it was pointed out in this survey. I love maps.”

**If “Yes”, which map(s) did you look at?**

	N	%
Contemporary Map	14	88%
1875 Map	13	81%
1895 Bromley	14	88%
1934 Brewer	11	69%
1962 Land Use	15	94%

“What do terms ‘1895 Bromley’ and ‘1934 Brewer’ mean?”

**Did you find what you expected to find in this section of the website?**

	N	%
Yes	11	69%
No	5	31%
Totals	16	100%

- “Could you fade streets and bring up backgrounds? They are interesting. Maybe a neutral color that is the same as old map so there aren’t harsh edges.”
- “I expected to be able to choose a street, any street, and get options for more information, search a map, etc.”
- Expected “clearer marking of ethnicity. It referred to the legend but I couldn’t read it on the map.”
- “Not sure of usefulness of this information or its significance. Difficult to interpret the background map.”
- “It doesn’t explain the legend for the maps box under STREETS or PLACES.”
- “I was surprised to see the contemporary map overlay on the historic maps.”
- “Didn’t know what to expect so my experience was much more about discovery than satisfied expectations.”
- “I do think the map drop-down could be improved with a parenthetical note for each map explaining what the map contains (e.g. ‘building material types’ for the Bromley map). Or maybe a rollover note with a few sentences about each, rather than having to open the map legend to deduce it.”

**DESIGN**

**Were you easily able to get to what you wanted to see?**

	N	%
Yes	14	88%
No	2	12%
Totals	16	100%

- “With the map pop-ups with video text, clicking ‘more’, then returning via ‘back’ leaves you in an inconsistent browsing state, losing your place.”
- “Yes, once I understood how to use it.”
- “If you select a neighborhood and topic, pick a story and click to read more, hitting the ‘back’ button takes you back to the full map rather than your selected focus.”
- “Color scheme is really well done.”
- “Movement on home page is nice.”

**On the left side of the PLACES tab under MAPS, above Topic, there is a box marked “Narrow by”. What does a check in this box mean?**

“One can narrow by topics/types of contributor locations.” (7)

“It shows all points. Perhaps instead of all, it could be at the top of the topic as ‘show all’.” (4)

“All the bubbles [map tacks] showing.”

“It should check all topics, but it does not.”

“I have no idea. Perhaps it selects every ‘topic’ by default. This is unclear.” (3)

“It means you are narrowing your search to whatever topics/parameters you choose below. Actually I’m wrong. It’s the opposite.”

## **CONTENT**

**Which topics on the PLACES tab did you find particularly appealing and interesting?  
(Multiple answers accepted.)**

Civic Life & Politics (4)

Education & Schools (3)

Food & Foodways (4)

Health (3)

Immigration & Migration (8)

Landscape and Architecture (8)

Oral Interviews (7)

Public & Social Life (2)

Religious Life & Beliefs (4)

Social Reform & Philanthropy (3)

Transportation (4)

Verbal & Artistic Expression (4)

Work (2)

### **Other comments on content:**

“Very good information.”

“Transportation could have used more items.”

“I like the information you get when you touch a balloon, but it isn’t always what you expect to find [for] some of the topics. For instance transportation. (No transportation indicators.)”

“Landscape and architecture- separate these.”

“I think the ability to narrow the search by topic is particularly helpful.”

“I like the ‘narrow by all’ option so I can choose anything in a neighborhood.”

**Which sections on the STREETS tab did you find particularly appealing and interesting? (Multiple answers accepted)**

4<sup>th</sup> Street (4)

9<sup>th</sup> Street (3)

I-95 (1)

Wallace Street (4)

Ethnicity (5)

Land Use (5)

Occupation (3)

“Loved all of them!” (2)

**What additional information would you like to see added to the MAP section of the site?**

- “More SREETS/neighborhoods information.” (4)  
“More neighborhoods, especially ones that focus on the African-American experience.”  
“Eventually all the streets searchable by name.”  
“Ways of overlaying two data sets in STREETS. Interesting to see if there is any correlation.”  
“Sports complex or housing or residency information of Philadelphia natives. (Famous athletes.).”  
“No page room for more- otherwise a locator map key of whole city.”  
“Would just like to see more contributors.”  
“Interpretation of demographic trends.”  
“A clearer distinction between orange and red bubbles.”  
“A little bit better resolution of the 1815 maps, lot of information, etc. is fuzzy, indistinct. Better resolution can be found in the ‘Ward Maps Collection’.”  
“The maps are very neat. Love them! Would like to learn more about the significance of these maps and particular years of these maps.”  
“A way to see the most recently added entries (by date) would be nice, as well as “features link to showcase new or interesting entries (especially oral histories, videos and other emerging multimedia additions).”  
“It would be interesting to add Betsy Ross to the site.”

**TECHNICAL ISSUES**

**Did you have any difficulties with the MAP section of the web site?**

*People did not have many technical difficulties.*

	N	%
Yes	1	6%
<b>No</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>88%</b>
No answer	1	6%
Totals	18	100%

- “Sometimes got stuck moving mouse over buttons. Rollover menu didn’t consistently pop-up.”  
“Congratulations on the lack of tech problems (I can usually crash a beta.).”

**Did you use the “Show Streets” button on the right side next to the pull down maps?**

*Lots of people did not see the “Show Streets” button.*

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>61%</b>
No	6	33%
No answer	1	6%
Totals	18	100%

- “This option is grayed out. It doesn’t do anything currently.”

“Saw that it said ‘contemporary’, but was not moved to see drop-down. [?] Was interesting to see that it offered historical map.”

Didn’t see the button.

“It was automatically turned on.”

“It took a little while to figure out.”

**If “Yes”, did it do what you expected it to?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>73%</b>
No	2	18%
No answer	1	9%
Totals	11	100%

“But, legends would be better if they popped up in a new tab, rather than download a pdf.”

“Hard to tell what it really showed.”

“I don’t think the button is very obvious, even though it was pointed out earlier, I forgot it was there. It just doesn’t look like a pull-down menu.”

**Did you try the “Add a Story” button?**

*Twenty-eight percent of the participants tried the Add-a-Story button.*

	N	%
Yes	5	28%
<b>No</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>72%</b>
Totals	18	100%

[No] “But only because I didn’t think was time to do it.”

“Maybe the button should be bigger or flashing to highlight.”

“I did not see it.”

“The button was hard to find.”

**Did you add a story?**

*No one tried to add a story.*

	N	%
Yes		
<b>No</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>100%</b>
Totals	5	100%

## OVERALL OPINION

### Do you think you will visit this website?

*Almost everyone said they will return to the website.*

	N	%
Yes	19	95%
Maybe*	1	5%
Totals	20	100%

\* "When they add my neighborhood."

### What did you like best about the site?

"Very rich in information." (2)

"Historical photos and information."

"History! Reading back-story about iconic neighborhood sites. Seeing some of my friends on the site."

"The history. It's for the public and it's free. Also it is very visual and widely accessible. Lastly it's educational for families, students and residents."

"The potential to learn so much about the history of neighborhoods."

"Learning about the history of my neighborhood in particular and Philadelphia in general. Seeing a huge amount of disparate data pulled together well, including user contributions that add rather than detract from the value of the site."

"All the information. The history, e.g. the first church and its architectural improvement."

"Demographics, stories, history of people and places, oral interviews. The more you look, the more there is to explore."

"Nice combination of data and stories presented."

"Old maps and variety of data points." (3)

"Frankly being able to flick through the five map choices is engrossing. 'Comparative cartography' can teach much about a city."

"The ethnicity maps. Fascinated by changing immigrant population."

"The stories, images, videos."

"I live in Queen Village. I thought I saw familiar faces. The neighborhood must be inbred. The sisters are really great."

"I love exploring how neighborhoods have changed over time."

"Comprehensiveness. Video pictures in context."

"I did not really use the tabs. I went to my neighborhood and started to look around. It was really interesting just to explore."

"You can really get lost in the site."

"Easy to use, nice design, organized topics and overall structure of the website."

"The GUI is very good. The maps are detailed too."

"Ease of navigation. I think it will be even better with additional contributors."

### What, if anything, would you like to change about the site?

"Include more neighborhoods!" (6)

"Would love to see more old street photos and shots of old buildings." (2)

"It would be great to be able to see some of the street maps side-by-side. To see comparison of the make-up/land use at different times."

"Ability to overlay maps, occupations and land use."

“Maybe intermittent pop-up balloons to highlight particular parts of websites. Pick out a few poignant stories and have them pop-up examples or lures.”

“More integration of data and stories.”

“I use Athenaeum’s Philadelphia Architects and Buildings a lot. I would love to see some convergence of the two. OK, just a dream, thanks.”

“Interactive functions.”

“More clear tab options.”

“Faster /more logical ‘Take a tour’.”

“Clearer explanation of how to use the PLACES menu.”

“The ‘show streets’ button should more clearly or obviously display some change in the maps.”

“The pull-down menu button on the right; not only is it not obvious, it’s visually annoying; it looks like a large patch. It’s in the way.”

**Is there anything else about this website or the MAP section you would like to tell us?**

“Great work!”

“Love it! Good job!”

“No. Both are user-friendly.”

“Printable maps in pdf. I love maps.”

“Great project.”

“Information under STREETS tab is interesting, but I don’t think that STREETS is a good header for the tab because it doesn’t really reflect the content – more about change than about streets.”

“I will be more likely to use this website when information about my current neighborhood or the neighborhood of my childhood is added. The oral interviews are the best!”

“I think it’s great. It offers so much information. I’ve been doing genealogy research and this website is very interesting and could be helpful for people doing all types of generic historical research.”

“Keep up the great work! This is a wonderful site that I’ve been visiting since it launched, and I think it is a great resource.”

Summary

Part 1

The majority of the participants were in the 21-31 year old age group. Fifty-five percent of the participants were female and 45% male. Most have a college degree and thirty-five percent have a graduate or professional degree. Most of the subjects are residents of Philadelphia.

The sample was 65% Caucasian, 15% African/American, and 20% Asian. Almost everyone uses websites several times a day for information. Most people have both a personal and professional interest in Philadelphia.

Part 2

More people did not find what they expected under Tour than with other sections.

Everyone could interpret the maps. People did not have many technical difficulties.

Most people saw the pull-down menu of maps. However, lots of people did not see the “Show Streets” button. People found the legends useful.

Twenty-eight percent of the participants tried the Add-a-Story button, but, no one tried to add a story.

Almost everyone said they will return to the website.



## Conclusions

The PhilaPlace website was well received. People found it interesting and engrossing. The design was aesthetically appealing and the overall site is easy to navigate. There were many small suggestions for specific sections of the Map section. These have been summarized in an earlier document, which is included here as an appendix.

APPENDIX  
Quick Summary of Suggested Changes to PhilaPlace Beta  
Minda Borun, March 18, 2010

**7.1 Neighborhoods:**

*Map tacks ("balloons") are confusing.*

"It would be better if it opened with no balloons." "It would be beneficial to see an overall map of neighborhoods."

"Balloons pile up. Hard to get to ones in back. Didn't know you can zoom in. Not obvious."

**7.2 Contributors**

*Unclear. What do "partners" and "visitors" mean? (3)*

"Are 'partners' business owners who paid for privilege of being on site?"

"What do the multi-colored markers indicate?"

**7.3 Take A Tour**

*Biggest problem is that it doesn't return to place you left after you go for "More".*

"Zooming in loses context in city"

"Better to use next/back arrows or boxes"

"Finding out 'more' loses your place in the tour."

"Doesn't take you back to where you were. Resets everything."(3)

**7.4 Legend**

*Confusion about use of legend*

"The placement could be improved. I found myself constantly scrolling up and down to refer back to it."

"Reducing the size and having it on the map would be better. Also, the "Legend" link in the map dropdown box (that opens the PDF of the original map legend) could be better labeled."

"Legend would be better if it popped up in a new tab, rather than a download PDF".

**7.5 STREETS Tab**

*People don't see the Streets Tab. It should be brighter (it looks grayed out).and should not have a bottom line when it is in front.*

"I did not immediately realize this was a tab I could click on. It blends into the background."

"It don't think the button is very obvious even though it was pointed out earlier, I forgot it was there. It just doesn't look like a pull down menu.

## 7.6 Maps

*People don't see the pull down maps menu. Also, they don't know what Bromley and Brewer mean.*

"Yes, but only after 20 minutes"

"Not until it was pointed out in this survey".

"I would rather see a layout similar to "Topics" and Contributors instead of a drop down menu. Then I can see all on one page what my options are."

"Not only is it not obvious, it's visually annoying. It looks like a large patch. It's in the way"

"What do 1895 Bromley and 1934 Brewer mean?"

"The map dropdown could be improved with a parenthetical note for each map explaining what the map contains(e.g. "building material types" for the Bromley map). Or maybe a rollover with a few sentences about each, rather than having to open the map legend to deduce it."

## 7.7 "Narrow by" box

*On the left side of the PLACES tab under MAPS, above Topic, there is a box marked "Narrow by". What does a check in this box mean?*

*People don't know what the "Narrow by" box means. Some people think it means "show all" Others think it refers to the topics checked below it. The box could just be eliminated, since checks under topics accomplish the same thing.*

"It shows all points. It could be at the top of topic as 'show all'."

"A check means the search will include all the topics."

"I have no idea. Perhaps it selects every "topic" by default? This is unclear."

"It means you are narrowing your search to the topics/parameters you choose below. Actually I'm wrong! It's the opposite."

"That one's search is narrowed by all topics mentioned below."

"All data points."

"Allows refinement of present point by topic."

"No idea."

"It should check all topics, but it does not."

"The search will show only returns related to boxes you have checked."

"The check means that the user wants to see flags for all the points of interest under the Topics listed below the "narrow by" check."

"It means you can narrow your results by Topic or Contributor by checking off the boxes in the 2 sections below."

"All the bubbles (map tacks) showing."

## 7.8 Content

*Need a clearer distinction between the orange and red bubbles (map tacks).*

"Better resolution of the 1815 Map. Lots of the info. is fuzzy, indistinct. Better resolution can be found in the "Wordmaps"(?) collections"

## 7.9 Technical Issues

*Fix the rollovers*

"Sometimes got stuck moving mouse over buttons (rollover menu didn't consistently pop up)".

## 7.10 "Show streets" button

*People didn't understand the "show streets" button. Needs a rollover or something.*

“This option is grayed out, it doesn’t do anything currently.”

“It was automatically turned on.”

“Hard to tell what it really showed.”

#### 7.11 **“Add a Story”**

*The Add-A-story button was hard to find*

“Maybe button should be bigger or flashing to highlight.”

## **APPENDIX C.**

### **Historical Society of Pennsylvania PhilaPlace Web Site Summative Evaluation**

Prepared by Minda Borun  
Museum Solutions  
November, 2010

**Historical Society of Pennsylvania  
PhilaPlace Web Site  
Summative Evaluation**

Prepared by Minda Borun  
Museum Solutions  
November 2010

---

### **Introduction**

The Historical Society of Pennsylvania (HSP) and its partners have developed *PhilaPlace* a unique interactive web-based experience that allows users to explore the rich historical, cultural, and architectural history of Philadelphia neighborhoods. Drawing on oral histories, photographs, resident memories, historical documents, and images of contemporary life, the site offers a vivid portrait of how Philadelphia neighborhoods have changed over time. *PhilaPlace* allows residents to share their stories helping to construct a collaborative image of Philadelphia's past. The site is a new model for connecting HSP's extensive archives and the contributions of local citizens.

Goals of *PhilaPlace* include:

1. Develop an online resource to illuminate the changing nature of Philadelphia neighborhoods over time;
2. Use storytelling and primary source data to show multiethnic perspectives on Philadelphia neighborhoods;
3. Present map data which shows connections over space and through time;
4. Create a new model for online interaction between experts and amateurs by allowing neighborhood residents to add their own memories to the city's historical record;

### **Summative Evaluation**

An interactive questionnaire was developed to assess user's reactions to the *PhilaPlace* website. This pop-up questionnaire was posted on the website. An introduction to the questionnaire appeared as people entered the site and the questionnaire reappeared after a period of exploration. Questionnaire information was entered into a spreadsheet for tabulation and analysis.

This report is based on survey responses of 214 visitors to the *PhilaPlace* website between March 26 and September 8, 2010. Some respondents did not complete the survey; the number of answers is noted for each question. The number of similar comments is shown in ( ) with typical and/or interesting examples given.

## **Detailed Results**

**TABLE 1: AGE**

	N	%
14 – 19	7	3%
<b>20 – 29</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>18%</b>
<b>30 – 39</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>21%</b>
<b>40 – 49</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>19%</b>
<b>50 – 59</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>22%</b>
60+	36	17%
Totals	214	100%

- *The majority of visitors to the site were adults in the 20-59 year old age range.*

**TABLE 2: GENDER**

	N	%
Male	89	42%
Female	125	58%
Totals	214	100%

- *There were slightly more women than men.*

**TABLE 3: EDUCATION**

	N	%
Less than high school	6	3%
High school diploma	35	16%
College degree	73	34%
<b>Graduate/professional degree</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>47%</b>
Totals	214	100%

- *The PhilaPlace site draws a highly educated user. The largest group had a graduate or professional degree.*

**TABLE 4: INTEREST IN SITE**  
(multiple answers accepted)

N = 214	N	%
Teach in a University	22	10%
Teach in K-12 setting	12	6%
Student	29	14%
<b>Resident of a Philadelphia neighborhood</b>	<b>72</b>	<b>34%</b>
Resident of local area, but outside Phila.	35	16%
Other (please specify)	82	38%

- *The largest group of site users are Philadelphia residents.*

Other Professions

Museum professional/Librarian/Archivist/Historian (27)

“Academic Librarian in Ohio”

“Educator in a museum”

“Archivist, Baltimore, Maryland”

“Historic preservation professional”

Retired (6)

IT related professional (6)

“IT/GIS staff member, Arizona State University”

“Web master interested in web 2.0 application and museums”

Artist/TV &amp; Film (4)



“Artist”  
 “TV and film producer, resident Mexico City”  
 Neighborhood worker/interest (5)  
 “Neighborhood volunteer”  
 “Contributor to site”  
 Other (8)  
 “House wife”  
 “Architect”  
 “Federal Government”

#### Non-Philadelphia Resident

Does not live in Philadelphia area but has an area connection (19)  
 “Hope to move to Philadelphia soon”  
 “Philadelphian native, now living in Texas”  
 “Mother from Philadelphia; learning her history”  
 From outside Philadelphia area (21)  
 “Brazil”  
 “New Orleans, Louisiana”

**TABLE 5: ETHNICITY**

	N	%
Black or African/American	14	7%
<b>White or European</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>80%</b>
Hispanic/Latino	4	2%
Asian/Pacific Islander	7	3%
Native American/Eskimo	1	<1%
Mixed Ethnicity	7	3%
Other (please specify)	10	5%
Totals	214	100%

- *Eighty percent of the user group is Caucasian, twenty percent all other groups.*

#### Other

Jewish (2)  
 Philadelphian (2)  
 Northern European (2)  
 Nice people (1)  
 White but not “strongly identify” (1)  
 Western European/American (1)  
 White Caucasian/South American (1)

**TABLE 6: INTEREST IN PHILADELPHIA HISTORY AND CULTURE?**

	N	%
<b>Personal interest</b>	<b>89</b>	<b>42%</b>
Professional interest	28	13%
Personal and professional interest	76	36%
Other (please specify)	21	10%
Totals	214	100%

- *The group is divided between personal and professional interest in the site.*

#### Other

Website development (4)

“Interested in learning more about website components.”

“I’m interested in web applications for culture in general”

Cultural web sites (4)

“Interested in new techniques for giving the public access to historical data”

“Professional interest in online experiences related to place and history and cities”

Genealogy/family history (3)

Because of Philadelphia connection (3)

“Born and raised in South Phila and West Oak Lane.”

“ ‘Activist’s activist’ who was one of the original urban pioneers in Northern Liberties”

Student project (3)

“History class’s assignment”

“Research paper for my MRE degree”

Mapping projects (2)

“I am always eager to see how mapping projects can work as part of an exhibit.”

“PAHNU Mass”

“I was looking for a special site like yours.”

**TABLE 7: FREQUENCY OF SEEKING WEB-BASED INFORMATION**

	N	%
<b>Several times per day</b>	<b>154</b>	<b>72%</b>
Once a day	8	4%
2 - 3 times per week	25	12%
Less than 2 times per week	27	13%
Totals	214	100%

- *PhilaPlace visitors are frequent web users.*

**TABLE 8: INTERNET CONNECTION?**

	N	%
<b>Broadband</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>94%</b>
Dial-up	3	1%
I don't know	11	5%
Totals	214	100%

- *Most PhilaPlace visitors have a broad band connection.*

**TABLE 9: BROWSER**

	N	%
<b>Firefox</b>	<b>93</b>	<b>44%</b>
<b>Internet Explorer</b>	<b>79</b>	<b>37%</b>
Safari	18	8%
Chrome	18	8%
I don't know	2	1%
Other (please specify)	4	2%
Totals	214	100%

- *Most people use Firefox or Internet Explorer.*

Other

“IE but usually Firefox” (1)

“All of the above” (1)

“Flock” (1)

“MSN Explorer” (1)

(note: answer to Q # 13 and others indicates one person was using Opera)

**TABLE 10: PHILAPLACE RATINGS**

N = 152	Very	Pretty Much	Some	A little	Not at All	Mean*
Interesting	136	15	0	1	0	4.88
Clear	87	56	3	6	0	4.47
Organized	94	51	4	3	0	4.55
Informative	118	31	1	2	0	4.74

\* Scored as Very = 5 to Not At All= 1

- Users gave PhilaPlace extremely high ratings on a 5-point scale (4.47-4.88).

**TABLE 11: PAGE RATINGS**

Page	Good	OK	Poor	N	Mean*
Home	113	19	0	132	2.86
Map	91	21	1	113	2.80
Places Tab	46	12	0	58	2.79
Choose a Neighborhood	43	8	2	53	2.77
Greater N. Liberties	43	6	1	50	2.84
South Philadelphia	46	7	0	53	2.87
Topic	32	4	0	36	2.89
Contributor	19	5	0	24	2.79
Take a Tour: South Philadelphia	32	3	0	35	2.91
Take a Tour: Greater N. Liberties	22	5	0	27	2.81
Streets Tab	14	2	0	16	2.88
S. 4th Street	16	3	0	19	2.84
S. 9th Street	15	3	0	18	2.83
I-95	16	2	1	19	2.79
Wallace Street	11	2	0	13	2.85
Dropdown Maps	21	3	0	24	2.88
Contemporary Map	34	2	0	36	2.94
Historical Maps	42	2	0	44	2.95
Topics	21	2	0	23	2.91
Neighborhoods	43	7	0	50	2.86
Topics	25	3	0	28	2.89
Collection	26	4	0	30	2.87
Neighborhood	30	6	0	36	2.83
Topic	19	3	0	22	2.86
Type	17	3	0	20	2.85
Contributor	19	2	0	21	2.90
Blog	19	3	1	23	2.78
Educators	14	2	0	16	2.88
Timelines	14	2	0	16	2.88
Mapping Our Neighborhood History	21	3	1	25	2.80
Mapping 4th Street	17	2	0	19	2.89
Discovering 9th St. Market	15	2	0	17	2.88

S. Philly Kaleidoscope	12	2	0	14	2.86
About	19	2	0	21	2.90
Mission	15	3	0	18	2.83
Neighborhoods	19	6	0	25	2.76
History	21	3	0	24	2.88
Support	9	2	0	11	2.82
My PhilaPlace	15	3	0	18	2.83
Add a Story	9	4	0	13	2.69
Save Stories	7	2	0	9	2.78
Create a Tour	7	2	0	9	2.78
Share (Delicious, Digg, Facebook, etc.)	10	3	0	13	2.77

\* Scored as Good = 3 to Poor = 1

- All ratings on individual pages were also extremely high (over 2.6 on a 3-point scale range is 2.69-2.95).

### Comments on low ratings

Note: People were asked to explain a rating of “poor”. There were only 7 ratings of poor.

Could not find area of interest (4)

“I couldn’t find it. My father’s house was on Front below Jackson”

Survey starts too soon (3)

“Survey request came up before I had a chance to do much. Your survey needs a “I didn’t see that” option.”

Other comments (5)

“Can you attach more pictures to the neighborhoods? Also, from what date is the map?  
Some street names seem different”

“ ‘Liberty Lands Park’ First off, the name of the park is Liberty Lands. Period. .... I do feel bad that your history website has “recorded” your version of Liberty Lands history inaccurately and also incompletely.. ... R. Mitchell Deighan, 851 N. 5<sup>th</sup> Street, Northern Liberties ... 267-970-0119”

“I love the site. What I don’t like is that it is hard to get up to Frankford. ...”

“None of these things about your site are very obvious at first glance... I only noticed the listed aspects as part of your survey... High marks on aesthetics and technology but low marks on excitement... I would like to see more contemporary, interesting pics of all of the neighborhoods, perhaps a then/now side by side....”.

“I gave only one item – the blog – a poor rating. I’m a firm believer that, if you’re going to have a blog linked to your site (which is otherwise fantastic), you really need to update it at least 1-2 times per week. ....If you need bloggers you could tell me ([ctodd@villanove.edu](mailto:ctodd@villanove.edu)) and I’d probably help out (paid or unpaid). Seriously.”

Extraneous answers (3)

“I will come back to explore more; this time it was just to see what you have done.”

“ I just use the Search box when I want to find something.”

**TABLE 12: FOUND WHAT EXPECTED**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>127</b>	<b>84%</b>
No	25	16%
Totals	152	100%

- *Most people said they found what they expected on the site.*

If “no”, what did you expect?

Found more than expected (7)

“I was completely surprised at what I found! It is wonderful!”

“Really enjoyed the design and organization, the easy interactive aspects, and your responsiveness”

“I’m in a course titled “The History of Philadelphia” at Villanova University. We were given a list of websites to look into as we write our online-based research papers. The other sites on the list were a little boring and difficult to get around. So I sort of expected *PhilaPlace* to be the same. Nope! It’s a great site.”

“This site is a lot more sophisticated than I expected, incorporating different media elements with a professional, clean look.”

Found less than expected (14)

“More stories about local leaders and people who made Philadelphia what it was, and is today.”

“I expected information on more neighborhoods. I suppose that will come with time, more exposure, and more participation. Keep up the good work!”

“I was expecting something really exciting and it’s a disappointment.”

“I thought there would be more photos and stories”

“More history on 1900s Philadelphia businesses”

“Videos, in particular the one I saw you shoot with me in it...”

“Still looking for specific pictures of our home.”

Did not know what to expect (2)

Extraneous answers (2)

**TABLE 13: DIFFICULTY WITH NAVIGATION?**

	N	%
<b>No</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>91%</b>
Yes	14	9%
Totals	152	100%

- *Very few people had any difficulty getting around the site.*

If “yes”, what difficulty did you have? (multiple answers accepted)

Navigation difficult/confusing (3)

“It's so hard to navigate and confusing.”

Visual elements difficult to use (4)

“Some of the main navigational elements lack distinct enough spacing”

“Too much information; too many visual elements all over the pages, particularly around the borders”

Program jumps back (2)

“Program interrupts and takes the cursor back to the nearest historic site ...”

“Terribly slow to load the maps” (1)

“I still have to find the Streets tab.” (1)

“No sense of personal connection” (1)

Cannot find what I submitted (1)

Survey started too soon (1)

Extraneous (1)

**TABLE 14: BUTTONS FOR MOVING FORWARD, BACK AND TO OTHER TOPICS EASY TO FIND?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>93%</b>
No	10	7%
Totals	141	100%

- *Almost no one had trouble with the navigation buttons.*

**If ‘no’, please explain.**

“I found them cumbersome” (1)

“I didn't see them.” (1)

“Kind of - if you understand how to use a computer” (1)

“Could not get back to the video” (1)

“I'm not sure which buttons you're talking about.” (1)

Did not use them (5)

**TABLE 15: UNDERSTAND MAPS AND PINS?**

	N	%
Yes	125	89%
No*	16	11%
Totals	141	100%

- *People understood the maps and pins. There were some suggestions for clarifying.*

If “no”, please explain

- “Things seem a little crowded but I am also viewing on a smaller monitor” (1)
- “1934 Brewer is unclear on housing locations, earlier ones are much better” (1)
- “Some kind of alphabetical or category-based listing of the points on the map might also have been nice. I was unable to find this as a distinct page or as a sidebar.” (1)
- “It's occasionally difficult to scroll/move around the maps to see other sites in the neighborhood.” (1)
- “Maps load more slowly than the pins, 'dragging' in the map's window seems to re-set the map load time and we lose a sense of where we are or where we were trying to drag to because the image disappears and loads slowly” (1)
- “Some street names/places are facing right and are hard to see” (1)
- “They are good, but a bit overwhelming. Perhaps you could have a different map for each different genre of event/location. Like a political event/location map, or a cultural event/location map. By having everything on one map it is hard to know where you want to go next.” (1)
- “This is a fantastic site that I'm using with my high school history classes. My only suggestion is that the historical and contemporary maps stay in the same scale and position as you switch between them so that you don't have to search for your location on each map.” (1)
- “Sometimes the balloon covered the map and the close X was outside of the map area” (1)
- “The map seemed to move randomly. While I was trying to check the "more" box, the map would move around instead.” (1)
- “I am very familiar with Google maps for instance... Perhaps you could populate it with their info... They show multi-media possibilities... I only see two forms of markers on your site... Also a bit of bias perhaps.” (1)

Did not look at maps (5)



**TABLE 16: VISIBLE LINK BACK TO THE HOME PAGE?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>129</b>	<b>92%</b>
No	12	8%
Totals	141	100%

- *The links back to the home page were clear.*

**If “no”, please explain.**

Does not know (12)

**TABLE 17: USE OF GRAPHICS AND COLOR**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>135</b>	<b>96%</b>
No	6	4%
Totals	141	100%

- *People found the site aesthetically appealing.*

**If “no”, please explain.**

Design is confusing (3)

“Too much clutter.”

“Graphics are a bit overwhelming. Too much stuff going on”

“Not crazy about teal header” (1)

“Not colorful enough, very bland” (1)

“It is not Philly... I need city grit, sound, feel, look...” (1)

**TABLE 18: INTERESTING AND CLEAR?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>130</b>	<b>97%</b>
No	4	3%
Totals	134	100%

- *Almost everyone found the information on the site interesting and clear.*

If “no”, please explain

- “How do you get to *PhilaPlace* from the HSP home page?” (1)  
“Not a fan of misinformation and inaccuracy...specifically here, in the context of Liberty Lands.” (1)  
“Interesting yes, clear no. This is not a reference site; it is for browsers only as far as I can tell. The organization needs to be more rigorous.” (1)  
“I will resume my look... But so far nothing stands out... It is not clear how I would like to or need to use this site yet...” (1)

### **FAVORITE PAGES**

(70 responses-- multiple answers accepted )

Maps (22)

- “I particularly liked being able to choose different maps and see the changes to the city visually.”  
“The maps Great stuff. Gives some colleagues of mine a new standard to aspire to on their own map work”

Neighborhood pages (9)

- “The information on the ethnic parts of the city and the people of certain communities”

Photographs (7)

- “The prominence of photos is awesome.”

Home page (5)

- “I like the home page which gives casual/first time visitors a chance to jump in with a specific place that looks interesting.”

Videos (4)

Personal stories (4)

Neighborhood tours (3)

- “The tours; would like to see them expanded to more neighborhoods.”

Northern Liberties (3)

Credits (2)

Topics (1)

Individual pages mentioned (13)

- Bel Arbor Garden, blog, Mill, Becker building, Shot Tower, Old Swedes Church, Restaurants and Eateries, Stetson Hat Factory (2), Kensington Hospital, Marshall Street, Southwark, Gloria Dei

Love the site (8)

- “The concept of the site is very interesting and has inspired me to see more of the city that I have overlooked previously.”  
“This is soooo much more interesting, diverse and user friendly than the city archives. Really well done.”

Survey started too soon to comment (9)

**ADDITIONAL INFORMATION OR WOULD LIKE**  
(50 responses--multiple answers accepted)

More neighborhoods (9)  
 More stories (5)  
 Search function (4)  
 More pictures (4)  
 Links to community records (2)  
 More "pins" (2)  
 Audio recordings (2)  
 More maps (1)  
 More video (1)  
 Real time discussion (1)  
 Update blog (1)  
 What's new page (1)  
 "Detailed description of how you design and administer this mashup. I'd love to replicate a similar type of resource for my community in the mid-west." (1)  
 "Increase time that a viewer has to read the info bubbles on the map." (1)  
 More information about specifics (4)  
     Masonry workers, immigrants, transportation, census data  
 Positive remarks (5)  
     "It's really robust. Great work!"  
     "I think you have represented a wide range of information here and I can't think of any thing else to add. Great site!"  
 Survey started too soon to comment (4)  
 Extraneous comments (5)

**TABLE 19: DIFFICULTIES WITH THE SITE?**

	N	%
<b>No</b>	<b>111</b>	<b>86%</b>
Yes	18	14%
Totals	129	100%

- *Most people did not have any difficulties with the site.*

If "yes", what difficulties?

Program jumps you back (2)  
     "Sometimes it gets frustrating when the pop up boxes drag you back to a site that you passed"  
 "When I clicked to the 'street view' I expected to see the street view alongside the photo that led me to the particular address. If it's possible to do that it would be really cool!" (1)  
 "Overview button for North Philadelphia/Kensington. You cannot check the box for NP/Kens, it is a header." (1)  
 "It was a little difficult to find people's stories" (1)

“When you check the "more" box it does not immediately go to the complete file for the location. Instead you have to check "more" again.” (1)  
 Problems with visitor input (2)  
 Video problems (2)  
 Browser problems (2)  
 Survey problems (4)  
 Extraneous comments (2)

**TABLE 20: DO LINKS WORK?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>124</b>	<b>96%</b>
No*	5	4%
Totals	129	100%

- *Most people thought the links worked well.*

If “no”, please explain.

“Survey link had an error, then loaded” (1)

N/A (4)

**TABLE 21: DID THE PAGES LOAD QUICKLY ENOUGH?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>90%</b>
No	13	10%
Totals	129	100%

- *Only the maps were a bit slow to load.*

**If “no”, please explain.**

Maps are slow (5)

“The pages load okay, but the map is very slow to generate....”

Slow at times (4)

Might be my computer (3)

“It did seem to take a while but that might be my Computer”

Extraneous comments (2)

**TABLE 22: WILL VISIT WEBSITE AGAIN?**

	N	%
<b>Yes</b>	<b>117</b>	<b>96%</b>
No*	5	4%
Totals	122	100%

- *Almost everyone plans to visit the website again.*

If “no”, why not

- “I made my visit via a link, so if there's another link that I want to follow here from somewhere else I'll be back. Otherwise probably not though, it was definitely a worthwhile visit.” (1)
- “The PAHNU Masses are at a different church each month.” (1)
- “The types of information presented here aren't predictable enough.” (1)
- “So far, at least, your stories and pictures are of a limited part of the city, a part I'm not interested in.” (1)
- “Probably not, because I got the information I needed. Thank you very much!” (1)

**WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT THE SITE?**  
(122 responses--multiple answers accepted)

COMMENTS ON CONTENT

Information in general (8)

- “Had the information I needed. Clear concise and complete”
- “It was packed with very interesting information, I could spend hours on it”
- “The site has a TON of information, yet it doesn't feel overwhelming.”
- “Vivid and diverse archives”

Information on Local Areas/History (16)

- “Great historic reference for our community Way to go!”
- “Location-based info”
- “The presentation of Philly neighborhood history in one place- it has been needed for a long time.”
- “Not only can you learn about places important in the history of Philadelphia, but you can find quaint little stores that had personal or private meanings to the people who lived in the area.”
- “It includes many areas that I am familiar with and some that I would like to visit in the future. It is very informative.”

Information through time (10)

- “How you can move through time and compare today with the past.”
- “The ability to use historic overlays and different categories of place markers”

Maps (30)

- “I love the map section”
- “The old map is awesome.”
- “The use of maps to do local history is very intuitive and makes a great interface.”

Pictures/photos (14)

“Photos not seen before”

“Interesting facts and photos about places in Philadelphia, some of which are no longer there”

Stories (8)

“Neighborhood stories”

“Diversity of the storytellers”

COMMENTS ON TECHNOLOGY/DESIGN

User participation (11)

“The idea to focus on user-generated content”

“Invitation for users to add their own contributions and memories”

“The prospect of telling my own story”

Ease of use (9)

“I feel the site was well organized and easy to navigate.”

“User friendly format of the web site”

“Loads quick and is easy to navigate”

Visual design (5)

“Looks great”

“The layout is well-constructed and visually appealing”

Good technology (6)

“Integrated approach to presenting information; use of tags on entries Very nice work.”

“Use of maps, web 2.0 technologies, and ability to build and engage a virtual community”

“Really innovative GUI combining CollectiveAccess and Google Maps Well done on the GIS front.”

Good concept (6)

“The concept behind it”

“What a cool, engaging, interactive concept. Loved the whole thing!”

Liked media (3)

“Access to video and audio”

GENERAL COMMENTS

General Positive Comments (15)

“Everything I saw was very interesting.”

“Great project”

“I liked the fact that you were out there.”

“Everything. It is one great site and I am looking forward to the expansion North.”

“I am glad I found it.”

**WHAT, IF ANYTHING, WOULD YOU LIKE TO CHANGE ABOUT THE SITE?**

(44 responses)

More neighborhoods (5)

More content (2)

More stories (2)

“A list of landmarks, either alphabetical or by category, that takes you to a given point on the map. For those cases when you know what you're looking for but not where it is.” (1)

“Add topical maps” (1)

“When you scroll over a pin point and then want to click on the “more” link, sometimes it rolls off of the pin point.” (1)  
 “Better directions.” (1)  
 “Clean up the design. Focus more on the map and the user interactions” (1)  
 “More pictures” (1)  
 “Make things available to the user longer before submitting it to the site for review” (1)  
 “Remove duplicate images.” (1)  
 “Get a local designer like myself to impart the look and feel of the city... This seems like an outside job that misses the mark... I could be wrong.” (1)  
 “The background having different historical photos that have a slight faded out gray look to them.” (1)  
 “Sliders” (1)  
 Repeats of answers to previous questions (5)  
 Survey started too soon to comment (4)  
 Don’t know (4)  
 No/nothing (7)  
 Extraneous comments (4)

**IS THERE ANYTHING ELSE ABOUT THIS WEBSITE YOU WOULD LIKE TO TELL US?**  
 (37 responses)

Enthusiastic responses (13)

“Truly awesome”  
 “I’m glad it’s here.”  
 “Good work! Setting the bar high is never a bad thing.”  
 “I want it! Would you contract out your web designer?”  
 “It is fabulous!”  
 “Thank you for doing this and I would like to see other cities do the same thing, especially the “old” cities such as Baltimore.”  
 “I love this site, it’s very informative, and educational, seeing and reading about the history of Philadelphia”  
 “Beautifully done...have you added geotagged pictures from sites like Flickr? The Library of Congress’ prints and photos has a collection on Flickr Commons which many users have geotagged. This could be a useful resource for genealogists or family historians as well. Laurel Hill Cemetery (NOT West Laurel Hill Cemetery) would be an incredible map to add - they have some very old maps in dire need of digitization / organizing there.”  
 “Just hope resident’s privacy is maintained.” (1)  
 “Yes, I want to see who lives here and what they do... So, more interactivity... SOCIAL NETWORK” (1)  
 “What is your opinion of Collective Access? We are considering it for the Lower Merion Historical Society; our site (LowerMerionHistory.org) needs an upgrade for better search and easier addition of more of our collection.” (1)  
 “I fully enjoyed my little journey back through time looking at the school where I teach. I am preparing some Social Studies lessons for my class on “Then and Now” so I found some things I want to include. I wish there was a current picture of the school though.” (1)  
 Survey problems (4)  
 Comments already made (4)

## **Conclusions**

PhilaPlace is a very successful and well-constructed website that is highly valued by its users. The response to the site is extremely favorable.

The majority of visitors to the site were adults in the 20-59 year old age range. There were slightly more women than men. The PhilaPlace site draws highly educated users. The largest group had a graduate or professional degree. Visitors are frequent web users and most have a broad band connection. Most people use Firefox or Internet Explorer. Philadelphia residents are the largest group of site visitors. Eighty percent of the user group is Caucasian, twenty percent consists of all other groups combined. Interest in the site is divided between personal and professional concerns.

Visitors to PhilaPlace gave the site extremely high ratings on a 5-point scale with averages ranging from 4.47-4.88. Ratings on individual pages were also extremely high (over 2.6 on a 3-point scale with a range of 2.69-2.95). Most people said they found what they expected on the site. Very few people had any difficulty getting around the site. Almost no one had trouble with the navigation buttons. People understood the maps and pins although there were a few suggestions for clarifying the maps. Some did comment that the maps were a bit slow to load. However, the maps were most frequently cited as favorite pages. The links back to the home page were clear. Most people thought that other links worked well. Almost everyone found the information on the site interesting and clear and people found the site aesthetically appealing.

When asked what they liked best about PhilPlace, people commented on the content, the use of technology and the design. When asked what they would like to change, many people asked for “more” (e.g. more neighborhoods, content, stories, pictures); this is a sure sign that the site is enjoyed. Almost everyone plans to visit the website again.